Jozette Booth will be acting as the hearing officer for DOE at this session. So with that, I'd like to call our first speaker, who is Dianne Nielson. She is the director of the Department of Environmental Quality for the State of Utah, and we're delighted to have a representative of the state. So if you'd like to step forward to the podium. Welcome.

MS. NIELSON: Thank you. Thank you very much.

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On behalf of the State of Utah, I'd like to welcome you here and thank you very much for arranging and holding one of the hearings here in Salt Lake City. This is a proposal that is of vital interest to the state of Utah, and we appreciate the opportunity for so many individuals to be able to participate in this hearing.

The State of Utah will be providing written comments. I'm going to highlight a few of those issues this evening. I don't have a written copy to leave with you, but I'll ensure that we cover those issues also within our written comment.

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First of all, I think it's important to realize that although transportation routes haven't been specifically designated at this time, that the state of Utah will most certainly be a main corridor state for

transportation, whether transportation occurs by truck or by rail. And therefore, we have a vital interest in the plan as it goes forward and the considerations relative to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Yucca Mountain.

Approximately 50,000 legal-weight truck shipments to Yucca Mountain could occur during the life of the project, or 11,000 rail cars and 2,600 legal-weight truck shipments, depending on scenarios. The numbers could be even higher if the shipments were dramatically

increased, if the storage at Yucca Mountain is not limited at 70,000 metric tons. 2

And while the Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to identify specific transportation routes, the state of Nevada has projected that up to 92 percent of the spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste would be transported through Utah en route to Yucca Mountain.

Moreover, rail lines and some of the highway routes which transport that irradiated fuel will be across prime watersheds and through major population centers in Utah. 3... In addition, there's a centralized storage facility proposed in Skull Valley by Private Fuel Storage, a

limited liability corporation, which, as presently identified, would begin in the year 2002 to accept and store up to 40,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel. On a national scale this volume represents a significant amount, more than half of the storage projected for Yucca Mountain.

And furthermore, by utilizing, or the potential of utilizing the Private Fuel Storage facility, transportation and the impact of transportation will even be heightened to the state of Utah, because material will be shipped into the PFS facility and then shipped out at a later date. We're indeed culpable to Yucca Mountain were

it to be constructed. Were it not to be constructed, we have an even bigger problem.

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I'd like to first address the need for a study that looks at specifically designated transportation routes. The plans within the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, while they have considered routes, have considered them without specifically identifying impacts that are related to those routes in a way that we can more effectively comment on them within the draft EIS, and yet those specific routes are very important to us. Under the Nevada study, it's expected that primary corridors would

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be I-80, I-15, and I-70, again, routes that include major population areas in the state of Utah.

It's important for us to be able to evaluate the impacts, and it's important for the Department of Energy to evaluate the impacts related to use of those corridors.

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Second, the Private Fuel Storage alternative has not been considered within the EIS. The draft fails to consider that over 40,000 metric tons of uranium as commercial spent nuclear fuel will be routed through that proposed facility, and yet that facility has not been considered as an integral part of the evaluation for Yucca Mountain. The draft does not take into account that the proposed Private Fuel Storage facility will be part of, by necessity, any transportation impact and should be part of

any transportation assessment. If it is not, then any of the estimates on transportation underestimate, underevaluate the risks and impacts to the state of Utah and affect the overall transportation risks of the project.

The path from the generator sites, the commercial power facilities to Yucca Mountain via the Private Fuel Storage facility in Skull Valley is not an issue of "right on the way." In fact, the transportation

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routes to the Skull Valley site are not routes that would normally be used for transportation to Yucca Mountain. And therefore, there are additional impacts which are likely by virtue of the fact that that facility or proposed facility in the draft EIS, the impacts on those transportation routes have also not been considered.

Because all of the fuel designated to be temporarily stored at the Private Fuel Storage facility is assumed to be eventually transported to Yucca Mountain, DOE has the responsibility to include this alternative as part of their evaluation. The more miles traveled result in greater doses and risks to drivers, escorts and the general public, and greater frequency or potential of accidents.

It may be the case that some accidents considered by DOE as, quote-unquote, not reasonably

foreseeable due to their low probability of occurrence ought to have been analyzed if you consider the additional travel and impact of use of the PFS facility. Various areas in Utah, including Salt Lake City, will be exposed to that same waste twice, and that should be evaluated.

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Third, the shipments of fuel will be shipped at a much earlier date, and hence the fuel will be hotter in

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some cases than the Yucca Mountain EIS projects. Let me explain. This isn't an easy concept, perhaps, if you're looking at just the Yucca Mountain facility. The operation of the proposed PFS facility is also going to affect the average age of irradiated fuel being transported to Yucca Mountain. We are concerned that it may mean that hotter fuel is being transported than the models used in the draft EIS projected. For instance, if the PFS facility is licensed and begins operating, then fuel currently stored at commercial reactor sites will be transported to the PFS facility much before the Yucca Mountain facility or repository begins operation; and if and when the proposed geologic repository begins accepting fuel, the utilities will ship more recently discharged irradiated nuclear fuels from their facilities to Yucca Mountain, while older fuel, quote-unquote, sits in storage in Utah.

It is in the utilities' best interest to remove

all the irradiated fuel from their reactor sites first in order to speed up decommissioning of their power plants, and thus the hotter fuel may in fact be shipped to Yucca Mountain first and may in fact alter the estimates that are part of the draft EIS.

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DOE used an average spent nuclear fuel age of 25.88 years to determine the health impacts of irradiated fuel transportation accidents in the Yucca Mountain EIS. This is clearly not a conservative nor a realistic number in light of the likely effects of also utilizing the PFS facility.

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The draft EIS also does not consider the potential of heavy haul truck transportation, and yet we know from the PFS facility discussion that's proposed that that's one of the alternatives that will be considered. Recognizing the impact of the PFS facility at Yucca Mountain, those considerations are also to be taken into account.

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Instead of providing reasonable estimates of the likely health and economic consequences associated with transporting nuclear fuel through Utah, the DOE has in its draft EIS analyzed a general transportation scenario that does not take into account that Utah will constitute 92 percent of the transportation, nor does it account the additional transportation impacts from the PFS facility.

Because Utah is expected to be a main thoroughfare for the nation's waste, except for that from southern California unless it comes to PFS facility first, special

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consideration should be paid to the impacts on transportation and the economy of the state of Utah.

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Sabotage is also downplayed within the draft EIS. The EIS provides the possibility and the consequence of sabotage using modern -- or should provide the possibilities and consequences of sabotage using modern weapons available to potential saboteurs.

The sabotage risk in Utah is increased for three reasons:

Other than Nevada, Utah will experience more transportation shipments than any other state.

It has unprotected transportation casks that could be backed up on rail yards as a result of the fact that Utah is the adjacent state to Nevada, and if there are transportation difficulties, may likely suffer some of those backlogs at rail yards.

And third, there's unprotected storage for the casks that will be located with the PFS facility.

The DEIS downplays the potential consequences of sabotage, equating the consequences to the effects of severe transportation accidents. Even though we don't have specific information on the weapons that have been

tested because of the nature of the report, and perhaps

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appropriately so, we would urge the DOE ensure that the work that is done include the most recent and most likely methods and weapons of sabotage.

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It is a likely scenario that the PFS facility will serve as a rest stop for irradiated fuel shipments. It is important that citizens of the state of Utah are assured that as the Yucca Mountain facility is evaluated that the impacts on the state of Utah are also considered specifically within that evaluation.

The Salt Lake region represents a major transportation point for rail and road shipments. Further, the shipping casks that have been designed for transportation to and storage at the proposed PFS facility haven't been adequately tested, and we are concerned would also have an impact on the Yucca Mountain transportation and transportation evaluation.

As I indicated, we'll be providing more detailed comments and additional comments by the written deadline. Again, I appreciate your willingness to be with us in the state of Utah, and thank you for the opportunity this evening.

MS. BOOTH: Thank you.